MEDITATION

A JOURNEY

INWARD

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INDEX

1] Art and science of Meditation

2] Mind

3] Concept of happiness and spirituality

4] Philosophy of Meditation

5] Theory of Meditation

6] Basic concept of Meditation

7] Steps of Meditation

8] Stages of Meditation

9] Methods of Meditation:

1] Art and science of Meditation

Meditation is the process of training, taming and transforming the human mind for the purpose of expanding mental capacity and for achieving higher mental growth. Meditation is the process of developing the mind. It is the process of de-conditioning and re-conditioning of the mind.

Swami Shree Chinmayanandji in his book *"Meditation and Life*" says that 'meditation is the art of training the mind. This secret alchemy of changing the baser men by the mysterious and spiritual touch of scriptural knowledge into the rich glow of divine charm and golden brilliance is the art of meditation'. He also adds further that *it is the elaborate technique of training the mind to forget its haunting dreams, visions of the world and to remember its glorious native visions of human.*

Training the mind

In fact meditation is the art and science of training the mind. Before understanding the process of meditation, it is imperative to understand the anatomy and physiology of the mind. Human body is the combination of several organs and systems. The central nervous system controls all the body functions. It consists of the brain and the spinal chord. In addition to the central organs there is a net work of nerves, which is called as the peripheral nervous system. There are five sensory organs. These are eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. These sensory organs are responsible for providing information of the outside world to the brain. For example eyes are responsible for visual information, ears are responsible for auditory information, skin is responsible for tactile information, nose gives the information regarding the smell and tongue is responsible for knowing various tastes.

The principal aim of life is survival. And the brain continuously protects the body from the harmful effect of the outside world, with the help of the information received by its various sensory organs. In addition, the brain also controls all the internal body systems. This is done with the help of hormones and special network of the nerves known as autonomic nervous system. This system is responsible for controlling, regulating and coordinating various systems of the body. Hormones and autonomic nervous system regulates the internal body functions in such a way that it can fulfill all the demands of the body

not only during normal period but also during stress and strain. As such it is the self regulating mechanism which regulates all the organs and the systems. Most of the brain functions are studied and analyzed in detail by the medical science. Medical researchers have also studied the same in various animals. Biologically, man is also an animal. But he is more advanced than other animals due to his highly evolved brain. Man is at the highest step, on the evolutionary ladder. He is highly evolved animal. His brain is engaged in more complicated and complex activities as compared to the animal brain. In addition to the basic activity of survival and reproduction, it also controls many other faculties of life. Human brain's activities are not only limited to the purpose of survival and reproduction but it can think, can analyze the different life situations, can remember the past experience and can also plan for the future. Besides this, the human mind, can engage in the emotional avenues of love, hatred, pleasure, sorrow, revenge, fear, jealousy, greed, desire, and many other emotional outbursts. These functions of brain are not properly analyzed and understood in detail by the medical science.

2] Mind

Mind is more subtle than brain. Brain is the gross physical entity. It can be seen. Its parts can be identified anatomically, while mind can not be seen. It can only be perceived. As such mind is subtler than brain. Brain can be compared with any high quality computer. As such computer can not run by itself. For running the computer, some one has to feed the data, some one has to load various soft programs. And some has to direct the computer to perform various functions. In the same way, the brain can not function without the orders and command of the mind.

A highly complicated and advanced computer can not run properly if the person who runs the computer is not having knowledge of various systems of the computer. Computer can be utilized as simple calculator in the hands of a child. The same computer can be utilized by the shop-keeper as a machine to prepare vouchers and maintain the accounts of the shop. The same computer can be used as a highly sophisticated machine, and can perform various high level tasks in the hands of a computer expert. In the same way each human being is given a similar brain. Anatomically each brain is having same parts and enough number of neurons and the same type of nervous network. But some persons can use it simply to control the body organs to maintain life and to carry out the day to day functions of life. At the same time researchers, scientists, mathematicians, writers, poets, are having capacity to use the same brain for highly complicated tasks like performing research work, analyzing complicated mathematical and scientific problems or creating the world's best literature. It is presumed that normal average person hardly utilizes 15-20% capacity of the brain. Even great scientists and researchers are also not in a position to utilize it to the fullest potential. *This is because the mind behind the brain is not efficient enough to utilize the brain of its full potential.* If the mind is strong and well developed, it can perform various hard and complicated tasks with the help of the brain.

What is mind?

As it is told mind is subtler than the brain. It is the driving power, which drives the brain as per its wish. In Hindu philosophy, mind is not considered as the brain. Mind is the human consciousness which is manifested in thought, memory, perception, feeling, will or imagination. The same mind is known and recognized with different names. When it is engaged in analyzing and solving problems it is

known as *'Buddhi'* or intellect; when it functions as a source of desire it is known as '*Mana'*; when it is deeply involved with emotions it is known as '*chit'*; and when the same mind officiates in the concept of I-ness and my-ness, it is designated as '*Aham'* or ego.

Mind, a subtle matter, is having multiple functions. It gives the feeling of I-ness to the person. When this feeling of 'I-ness' is extended to other objects, either living or non-living, it is modified as 'my-ness'. Mind is all the time busy expanding and enlarging the circle and area of my-ness which is perceived by the person as personal development and growth which in turn sows the seeds of new desires and expectations from life. These desires may be to become physically strong, or may be the desire to get more property and possession, or may be the desire to have more power and prestige, or may be the desire to get social recognition. There is no end to this list of desires. This feeling of my-ness also gives birth to the feeling of attachment.

Attachment is known as *Asakti* in Sanskrit language. Person can have *Asakti* for his own body, or *Asakti* for one's family and friends or property and possessions. The resultant outcomes of all these feelings are love or hatred, happiness or un-happiness, joy or sorrow, pleasure or displeasure. The person spends whole of his life to fulfill his desires, with the intention to get happiness, but as all the desires and expectations can not be fulfilled, so he never gets permanent feeling of joy and contentment. At the end, in the later period of his life, the person realizes that despite of all the material gain of power, prestige and property, he does not feel 'fulfilled' and happy in life. He feels incomplete and empty. This emptiness within, can not be fulfilled by any of the material gain in the life. He gets the feelings of failure and despair.

From this point onwards he changes his path. He realizes that material success can not give him permanent and lasting happiness. Material success can not fill his inner emptiness. Material success can not give him the sense of total achievement of life. He constantly feels that some thing is missing in his life.

From this point onwards man starts his journey towards spirituality.

3] Concept of happiness and spirituality

The journey towards spirituality is the journey towards true happiness in life. The ultimate goal of human life is happiness. Most of the people perceive happiness in property, power, prestige, status and other luxuries of life. But those who have achieved enough wealth, prestige, status and power in life, are also not happy. It means that material gain and fulfillment of multiple desires are not the real means to get happiness.

Happiness is the state of mind, which generates feelings of contentment, joy and fullness in life. The human mind enjoys this feeling and desires repetition of the same. The concept of happiness is different with different persons. Not only that but it changes for the same person from time to time. A child is happy with small toys but with the advancement of age; he requires different types of toys for getting pleasure. Young boys are happy with different games like cricket, tennis etc. In the initial period of one's career one feels happiness on achieving different luxuries of life. After the age of forty, the person craves for prestige and social recognition. He also desires to have money and power. But all these materialistic gains do not satisfy and fulfill his deep rooted desire for happiness. At the end he realizes that none of these objects can give him permanent and lasting happiness. He also realizes that absence of misery is not happiness.

As such happiness can be defined as a positive state of mind, which leads to quietude, bliss and ecstasy. The feeling of ecstasy is a very rare phenomenon with the common person. The word ecstasy is generated from the Greek word 'ecstasies'. 'Ecstasies' mean 'existent to drive out of one's senses'. It is the sense of intense joy and delight. If the state of emotion is so intense that one is carried beyond thought and self control it is the trance or rupture of mystic or prophetic exaltation. As such it is the state of mind, when it enjoys mere existence. It is at the state of thoughtlessness and egolessness, one enjoys his happiness at its fullest potential.

This feeling can not be brought voluntarily in day to day life. It occurs by itself. It is the sudden spurt of some unknown highly pleasurable feeling at some moment in life. For example, when a person is sitting quietly in front of vast sea, he enjoys the vastness and beauty of the sea. He is totally engrossed in the quiet pleasure of nature. He forgets his worldly connections with family, property, money, prestige, power. At that moment he is not a big powerful officer, or rich man of the

society. *He is just himself. There is only he and the vastness of nature.* Gradually, he is totally absorbed in nature and his l-ness is lost. He becomes one with nature. He feels that he and the vast sea in front of him are not two separate entities, but both the entities get merged at a subtler level in his mind. Suddenly he feels a sudden spurt of some unknown, undefined, highly joyous condition, which is nothing but 'ecstasy'.

There are a number of incidences in life which can lead to such a state of mind. The musician engrossed in producing real beautiful music, becomes one with the music and at one point of time he losses his own identity. By becoming one with music, he himself becomes the music and he experiences the feeling of ecstasy. Any creation or any creative activity which is done with a selfless motive, and which is performed with the sole aim of creating beautiful creation, can give rise to such a feeling of happiness. A painter gets the same feeling when he finishes his painting after the hard labor of several days. A writer gets the same feeling, when he finishes his writing and produces a beautiful piece of literature. The same feeling can be achieved, when the person performs certain actions, which are helpful to others and when the action is performed without the expectation of any material reward. Hence this feeling can be achieved only while imparting selfless love towards others and that too sans expectations.

In all above example it is evident that one can get such feeling, provided he fulfills certain conditions. The first condition is 'selfless act'. Action should be without any selfish motive. One should not expect any reward from that action. The musician, who sings for performing stage shows and earning money, will not get that feeling of ecstasy. The painter, painting the picture for the sole purpose of selling the picture in the market, will also not experience the original joy of creation. Helping others for gaining prestige or recognition from the society will again not give rise to this feeling of ecstasy. So the first condition for achieving happiness is 'selflessness'. One has to forget the self. One has to dissolve his ego.

Again this feeling can not be gained when the mind is full of turmoil and stress. Only a quiet and peaceful mind can get this feeling. It means that there should not be any thinking in the mind. The mind should be in the state of thoughtlessness. As such mind is nothing but a bundle of various thoughts and feelings. If there is no thought or there is no feeling, the mind will not exist. It will die and extinguish. It will disintegrate. This is the state of mindlessness. When there is no

mind, there can not be the feeling of I-.ness or my-.ness. The feeling of I-ness merges and dissolves with the prevailing vastness of nature, with the super power of universe or with Brahma as mentioned in the Hindu philosophy. When one gets dissolved in the domain of the super power, the 'I' is lost or merged with the superpower and one experiences the feeling of *'Aham Brahmasmi'*. So primary conditions for gaining such feeling are:

i] One should be selfless

ii] There should be absolute concentration of mind for fulfilling the task.

iii] Mind should be quiet and peaceful.

iv] The final state is thoughtlessness and egolessness with the dissolution of self.

v] Once the self is totally dissolved one experiences the feeling of ecstasy.

The state of egolessness, thoughtlessness and mindlessness can be achieved through the regular practice of meditation.

4] Philosophy of Meditation

It is an act of molding the mind.

It is the act of transforming the mind to the super-mind. Molding means giving a different shape as per the vision of the creator. When sculptor takes the stone, to create an art of work, he has a definite idea in his mind, regarding his idol. In the same way when one desires to transform the mind; one must have a definite idea, as to what type of mind he wants to create through the practice of his meditation. It has rightly said by some great thinker that '*You are the stone. You are the chisel. And you are the sculptor'.*

Our mind being the decision maker, it should be strong and capable of taking the right decision on the right time. The mind creates its own image of 'I'. So the mind should have the clarity as regards the real image of 'I'. Mind being the place of creativity, it should be highly creative. The feelings of happiness, unhappiness, pleasure, sorrow etc. are felt at the mental level. So one should mold the mind; in such a way, that it will remain calm, composed, undisturbed and unperturbed in all the circumstances of life. The main faculties of mind are memory, intelligence, receptivity and creativity. All these faculties should be strengthened, so that one can utilize the mental power at fullest potential.

In short, the mind should be redesigned in such a way that with the help of such a mind one can achieve higher objectives of life and living. These objectives may be either material success or spiritual happiness. The process of thus molding the mind is called as meditation.

It is a process of deconditioning and reconditioning of the mind.

Conditioning of the mind is a continuous and a constant process. It starts from the birth and continues for the entire life. Conditioning is the behavioral response of the mind to the external stimuli depending upon past experiences and memory. The human mind is conditioned in various ways. A simple example of conditioning is the timing for the feeling of hunger. Each person gets feeling of hunger at the specified time at which he usually takes his meal. Hence the office goers who are conditioned to eat at 10.00 a.m.; will get the sensation of hunger at 10.00 a.m. and those who are habituated to take a late lunch will feel hungry in late after noon. The affinity for particular colors; or for a particular type of music; or for a particular type of cuisine; are

examples of the conditioning of the mind. *All religious beliefs are nothing but examples of conditioning of the mind*. And all superstitions are examples of the strong conditioning of the mind. For example, the people in the western countries consider number 13 as an unlucky number, while for the eastern people the number 13 is neither lucky nor unlucky. Thus the human mind is conditioned consciously or unconsciously for many subjects in life. This conditioning depends upon the past experience, family culture, society culture, religion and caste. Conditioning of the mind is the resultant outcome of our past experiences. The child who has been brought up in a Hindu family will consider it sinful to eat non-vegetarian food, while a child who has been brought up in a Muslim family will eat non-vegetarian without any tinge of guilt. Because of the conditioning of the mind, the person reacts in a definite pattern. He looses flexibility and rationality of the mind. Such a mind is corrupt by a number of wrong beliefs and superstitions.

Stephen Covey in his book named "The seven habits of highly effective people" has coined a new word "Paradigm' for 'conditioning of mind'. The word 'paradigm' comes from the Greek language. It was originally a scientific term, and is most commonly used today to mean model, theory, perception, assumptions, or frame of reference. With more general terms it is the way we 'see' the world not in terms of our visual sense of light, but in the terms of perceiving, understanding and interpreting.

Human mind has the capacity to store the information and experiences as memory. From childhood it collects a lot of information and stores it in the compartment of memory. Information is not stored as mere factual events. But that is tagged as good or bad, joyful or sorrowful, painful or painless. In future when such incidences are repeated it is immediately perceived in the light of previous experience. The child, who has been beaten severely in the school by the teacher, believes that all the teachers in the world are cruel. So whenever that child meets any teacher, he will have feeling of fear, and his body and mind will react accordingly. For the person who has been cheated by a friend will not trust anybody in his life time.

A fixed paradigm or conditioning of the mind pollutes the thinking process. It is the belief of the yogic philosophy that 'the past experiences stored in the mind' shapes behavior and pattern of thinking process. In the yogic terms, it is known as *'Karmashaya"*. It is believed that the mental-effect of all the karmas of life, are stored in

"Karamshaya", and because of the effect of this '*karamshaya*', the person looses his ability to perceive rightly. Hence wrong perception will lead to wrong assumption, which will lead to wrong conclusion and finally wrong decision.

So it is imperative to remove all the wrong ideas, wrong beliefs and irrational thoughts from the mind. An adulterated and a corrupt mind, is unable to reach to the final stage of quietude, bliss, and ecstasy. So the mind should be cleaned thoroughly. The cleaning process of the mind is called *'chit-sudhi'*. This can be done through meditation.

It is the journey inward

Meditation is the process of introspection for the purpose of self analysis. Human mind is all the time engaged in remembering past events or analyzing and reacting to present events or planning for the future. The person is all the time busy analyzing the different behavioral patterns of others. Most of the time, he is critical for the presumed negative characters of others. Every man assumes that he is the best person in world devoid of any flaws. Man never critically analyses himself. He always holds other people or some life situations to be accountable for his unhappiness. He never dwells into self inquiry and sees that he himself is responsible for all his feelings of happiness and unhappiness. *Meditation thus gives one the access to self introspection.*

Every person has positive and negative characters. Positive characters are like vitamins and such characters strengthen mental capacity. While negative characters erode and weaken the mind. No human being has only positive characters or only negative characters. The human mind is a conglomeration of positive and negative characters. However the degree of the positive and negative characters varies with different persons. For strengthening the mental capacity, one has to minimize the negative characters and maximize the positive characters. This can be done by the process of introspection and self analysis.

For the process of self analysis, one has to be critical and a neutral and impartial judge of himself. One has to analyze his own nature and behavioral pattern. One has to be especially aware of one's negative characters. It is the nature of human mind, that as soon as it becomes aware of the negativity of his characters, the same characters will be dropped automatically. The person who realizes that he is

highly egoistic, shall become aware of his own ego, and automatically his ego will be dropped. The person has to systematically analyze himself to become aware of his negative characters so that they can be minimized. In the same way, the positive characters are also to be recognized and strengthened.

It is the process for training the mind for living in the present

Human mind is all the time busy. It can not remain idle for even a fraction of a second. Most of the time, it is either busy dwelling on the past event or planning for the future. The mind has a habit to dwell on the past events. If the past events are joyful then it enjoys those moments. But most of the time mind dwells on the past events which were unhappy or the events where he was defeated, or when his ego was hurt. The memories of such events generate the feelings of helplessness and hatred, which subsequently weakens the mind. If the mind is not busy with past, then it wanders in the imaginary future. It plans for the future. It builds up the castle of great desires and expectations. One dreams that this imaginary castle of desires and expectations shall be fulfilled in the future and shall give him limitless happiness. When he realizes, that such expectations can not be fulfilled, one experiences feelings of unhappiness and frustration in life. So in fact, dwelling on the past disagreeable events or dreaming about an illusory future depletes the mind of its inner power, energy and happiness.

Most of the time, the person is not mentally present in the present moments. For example, a person may be walking in the garden where there are beautiful trees, flowers and birds in the garden. However his attention is not in the garden. He is not enjoying the beauty of nature but he is dwelling on his past or the future. A person may be eating his lunch. But Instead of enjoying his lunch, he pays attention to reading newspaper or watching the television. Hence his attention is diverted and he can neither enjoy his lunch, nor can he pay full attention to the news.

Most of the time feelings of unhappiness are mental in origin. It is created either by dwelling on unhappy past events, or by creating unmet future expectations. With the result, the mind misses the joy of being in the present moment. **If the mind learns to remain in present moment, the chances for self created unhappiness will be minimal.**

With the regular practice of meditation, one can learn how to keep the mind in the present moment and enjoy it fully.

It is the path to super-human status

On the ladder of evolution, unicellular organisms are at the bottom and human being is on the top. The law of survival and reproduction applies to all living organisms. Nature has provided specific mechanism to each species for their survival and reproduction. Food and security are basic requirements for survival. Animals learn the technique of acquiring food and protecting the self, by instinct and by genetic inheritance. Most of the animals do not possess the capacity to think. Hence they can not remember the past, or analyze the situation in the light of past experience and plan for the future. For example, every day, birds and animals, wander in search of food. As soon as they get food, they satisfy their hunger and then relax. It has never occurred to the animals that food should be stored, so that it can be used for the next day. Most of the animals sleep wherever they find it convenient, but it has never occurred to them to build special houses, which can protect them in all the seasons.

Man is gifted by a higher mental faculty. He can think, analyze, evaluate and plan for the future. Man has found out various techniques of farming and solved the problem of food. He has built protective houses, which can protect him against most of the dangers. Further man started staying in groups for the purpose of security. Modern societies are modified forms of group living of the primitive man. He formed number of rules and acts, for the purpose of personal behavior. Modern development is due to the higher mental faculty of man.

Shri Arbindo has visualized the possibilities of man having the potential to be a super-human being. A super human may have much higher mental capacity then a normal human. Man has five sensory organs. These are ear, nose, eye, taste and touch. Our sensory organs are having limited capacity. For example, eye can see limited band of frequencies of light. It can see violet to red color. But it can not recognize ultra-violet or infra-red color. In the same way, our ear can listen to sound waves for a limited wave-length. But our ears can not hear ultra-sonic sound waves. There are animals on the earth that are having a better visual capacity or auditory capacity than human beings. Bat's ears are so sensitive that it can hear the echo of its own

sound and through that can determine its path of flight and avoid hurdles when flying. The dogs are gifted with a strong nose, so that they can smell certain objects from a very far distance.

In spite of limited sensory abilities, man has developed a highly sophisticated system for communication. Animals and birds can communicate with each other but the capacity for communication is very limited. Man is the only species who has developed language for the purpose of communication. Man is capable of communicating his thoughts in various languages, through the medium of speech or writing.

It is also observed that human mind does not think in the terms of language. Mind thinks by creating various visual impressions on mental screen. If it memorizes the past event, visual impressions are created on the mental screen, of that past event. If it plans for the future, then, in the same way visual impressions of future expected events are created on his mental screen. So in the process of speaking, the first stage is creation of visual impression on the mental screen. In the second stage, mind converts that impression in language, and finally it is brought out either as speech or writing.

There are yogis who have the capacity to read the thoughts of others. Their mental capacities are so sharp and developed that they can clearly see the visual mental images on the mental screen of the other person. Yogis endowed with such a capacity can easily read the thoughts of other person. It may happen that yogi may not know the language of other person. In spite of that he can catch and understand his thoughts because, a yogi can see and catch the thoughts at the image stage. In the same way, a yogi can understand the feelings of animals. Such capacities of having higher capacity perceptive organs and the ability to understand the opposite person's thoughts and feelings, without the normal way of communication are the characters which can make super-human out of a common man. This can be achieved through regular and the constant practice of meditation.

It makes the man a complete man

It is the personal ego, which compels the man to perform various activities. In the modern society, man performs various activities to satisfy his personal ego. The primary instinct of any living organism is survival. Hence all its activities are directed towards sole purpose of

survival and reproduction. Primary objects for survival are to seek food and protect the self against danger. In the case of human being, his activities are spread widely beyond the horizon of activities for getting food and shelter. Most of his activities are for strengthening his own ego. It is the basic nature of the human being, to show him superior to his fellow human being. He achieves wealth to prove himself richer than his fellow men. He builds big houses to show his superiority over his neighbors. He gets higher qualifications to show his educational superiority. He achieves power to prove himself stronger than others. This basic instinct is wide spread. All the desires to achieve wealth, status, power etc., are born from the basic instinct of strengthening his ego. He wants to be superior to other in all the fields of life. Internally he feels incomplete in a number of fields of life. He strongly desires to be complete. Most of the desires are born from the feeling of incompleteness. The person, who feels incomplete with respect to wealth, desires to achieve more wealth. The person who feels incomplete in knowledge tends to achieve more knowledge. The person, who feels powerless, desires to achieve more power. The ultimate aim of all these desires is to be complete man.

As per Hindu philosophy, the sense of completeness or incompleteness is the result of self mental projection. One can feel incomplete in spite of getting all the wealth, power and status in life. At the same time another person may have the feeling of completeness despite having few material successes. History reveals that most powerful kings, in the world were not happy because they were feeling incomplete in spite of having huge wealth and immense power.

Upanishad proclaimed confidently regarding our '*inner self*' *or* '*Atman*'. It says that *Atman* is the projection of *Brahman. Brahman* is the universal live-force. And *Atman* is the individual life force. As *Brahman* is supposed to be complete by itself, its own projection *Atman* is also complete. Now each living organism is nothing but *Atman. Atman* is immortal, unborn, and unalterable. Unalterable means that one can not change its quality and quantity. Its shape can not be changed. It can not be made bigger or smaller. It means it is complete by itself. Hence it is logically proved that ***Atman* is complete.** So each organism including man is complete in itself. God or the Creator has made each organism complete. For example, when a child is born it is full of life. A child is very happy as it is living in the domain of completeness. As the child grows up, the seeds of new desires and expectations are sown in his mind. And over a period of

time as this child grows into an adult it ventures into the domain of incompleteness.

Most of the people are not aware of this nature of completeness of self. The sense of incompleteness is the root cause of their unhappiness. When the person discovers the nature of completeness of self, he attains permanent happiness. Then nothing is left for him to achieve. His mind achieves the stage of desirelessness. He enjoys his existence as a complete man. This sense of completeness can be achieved through regular and constant practice of meditation.

It is the process to realize pure self

As per the Hindu philosophy, human body is the combination of three main layers. Outer which is made up of skin, muscles, bone, organs, which can be seen by the naked eye, is called as the physical self. The second layer is the mind which is made of ego, feeling of I-ness, memory, intelligence, analytical power, creative power, etc; is the seat of all emotions, feelings and thoughts. It is known as the inner self. It can not be seen as it is subtle. It can be felt. All the feelings of pleasure, sorrow, joy, happiness, unhappiness, etc. can be felt at this place. The third, more subtle is the pure-self or *Atman.* It is the pure living force. One can not survive without this living force. It gives vital energy to inner and physical self. It is considered as unborn and immortal. At the time of death, it leaves the physical body. It being pure, no feelings can be felt at this level. At this level there is no pleasure or displeasure. There is no joy and there is no sorrow. There is neither happiness nor unhappiness. It is the pure live force.

It is presumed that the mind or the inner-self is in constant contact with the physical self. Because of that attachment, it remains in contact with whole external world, through various sense organs. With the result various emotional mental turbulences are created in the mind. Such turbulences can create waves of joy and happiness or it can create waves of sadness and unhappiness. Human mind, all the time moves between two points of happiness and unhappiness like a pendulum. But when the same mind or the inner-self comes in the contact of the pure-self, it connects itself with the pure self. The pure self is the live force. It is steady and quiet. There are no emotional disturbances. It is like the quiet water of the lake. So when the mind connects itself with the pure-self, it takes up the characters of the pure-self; and it becomes calm, quiet and free from mental turbulences. All the desires and all the expectations are dropped

automatically, because there is no motive to strengthen the ego. Ego is automatically dropped. This is the stage of quietude and bliss. This can be achieved by regular and continuous practice of meditation.

The ultimate aim of meditation is ecstasy, mukti, and Moksha.

Ecstasy is the state of intense joy and delight. It is the state of emotion, so intense that one is carried beyond thoughts. It is the state of thoughtlessness and egolessness. In this state one feels liberated from all worldly bondages. One gets the feeling that his body is weightless and he is free to fly in the whole universe. He feels that all his worldly attachments are broken. He is independent, he is liberated. His *atman* is free from the cage of the physical body and free to merge with the universal live force or to merge with Mother Nature or almighty the God, as if, the water of the small rivulet is now free to merge with the Great Ocean. Now there is no sorrow, no sadness, no desire, no attachment, no fear, no happiness and no unhappiness. Thus he realizes the true nature of his *Atman.* He realizes that he is not the physical body but he is only the *pure-self or Atman.* Now there is no fear of death. This is known as '*mukti' or 'moksha'*. In the eyes of *Patanjali,* it is called *"Kaivalya"*. This is the ultimate stage to be achieved by each human being. This is the ultimate aim of life for each individual. And this can be achieved through constant and regular practice of yoga and meditation.

5] Theory of Meditation

Meditation is the process of training, taming and transforming the mind for the purpose of achieving higher mental status. Human mind has a high potential capacity. It can perform highly complicated and sophisticated tasks. But most of the time, most of the people hardly utilizes 20% of his mental capacity. Eighty percent of mental capacity remains unutilized by the normal human being. It is possible to expand utilization of the mental power by the process of meditation.

Meditation is the process of remolding and reshaping the mind. But the person who wants to remold his mind should have a definite vision of final mold. One should have clear and sharp idea regarding the final objective one desires to achieve with the help of meditation.

The process of meditation can be utilized for various purposes such for, developing the skill of concentration, relieving mental stress; acquiring and strengthening positive characters like stability integrity; rationality, fearlessness and compassion; Removing negative characters like desire, attachment, anger, fear, greed, vengeance etc. Expanding mental capacity like memory, intelligence, creativity and receptivity; achieving the stage of mental peace and quietude; attaining spiritual success by realizing pure-self.

Those who are eager to engage in the practice of meditation may have varied aims of life. The technique of meditation may vary from person to person. The technique which is suitable for one person may not be suitable for another person. *The techniques of meditation depend upon selected aim, basic mental capacity and mental attitude.*

One who desires to develop one's mental capacity should be aware of basic characters of the mind. Most of the time mind grows and develops by itself. As such the mind is always in the process of development. Each individual mind learns and gains the knowledge of various subjects everyday. But most of the time the knowledge gain is not helpful for the right development of the mind. The person who intends to train and tame his mind as per his own objective should know the basic required characters of the mind. These characters are

1] The mind should be calm and quiet. Only calm and quiet mind can think deeply, can analyze the problems and can create new ideas.

2] The person should be aware of his positive and negative characters. Awareness helps the mind to strengthen positive characters and to drop negative characters.

3] The mind should be pure, clean and devoid of prejudices. Only clean and pure mind can imbibe new ideas.

4] The person should have the capacity to concentrate on specific subject. Only with concentration one can reach to the depth of the subject and can understand it.
5] One should have fixed and specific objective to be achieved.

The process of meditation provides appropriate environment and fulfills all the pre-requisites for the development and growth of the mind. *The basic concept of meditation is to provide rest, relaxation and quietude to the mind.* Restful and relaxed mind shall act as a fertile soil for the mind to grow and develop by itself. In addition it trains the mind for concentration and enhances the awareness of the mind.

How meditation helps maximizing mental capacity?

As such meditation is a very simple process, even though it is claimed to achieve amazing results. One may get baffled, as to how such a simple procedure can produce such remarkable results. Basically human mind is a very complicated and complex entity. It has a huge potential to develop different faculties like memory, intelligence, creativity and receptivity. But in routine environment, the mind is not able to develop these qualities to its fullest potential. This is because most of the time, the human mind remains occupied in the most trifle matters. Most of its energy and time is dissipated and wasted for unimportant and irrelevant tasks. The common day to day tasks can be performed by comparatively lower and ordinary mental faculty of the mind. Higher and complicated mental faculties are never utilized, because it is not required in solving trifle problems of life. This is like employing a very efficient scientist for the work of performing routine laboratory tests. In this case, the employer is unaware of the capacities of the scientist and utilizes him as an ordinary laboratory technician. With the result all the research capabilities of the scientists remain unutilized. In the same way most of the people are not aware of their own mental capacities with the result this capacity remains unutilized and untapped.

If the person desires to utilize his untapped mental capacities, then he must withdraw his mind from the routine ordinary tasks.

Chit-shuddhi:

Most of the people collect numerous unwanted and unnecessary data in their minds. Their memory section of the mind is full of vast and varied data. Most of this data is not useful and not required. This data not only occupies a big section of the memory space in the mind but it also pollutes the mind. This space can be utilized for storing more useful and valuable data. Since birth, the mind starts collecting information and starts storing this information in the memory box. All the past actions, events and knowledge are stored as various memory files in the memory box. These memory files are also marked by the mind as either good or bad, either happy or unhappy events. This is true for all the memory files.

These stored knowledge or experience, influences future behavior of the mind. For example if the person had a bad experience from his neighbor in the past, his mind will label all the neighbors as bad neighbors. If somebody has been cheated by a gold-smith, he will carry the impression that all the gold-smiths are dishonest. Such an impression creates wrong prejudices towards certain persons, castes, religions or objects. And hence such prejudices will affect adversely the judicial thinking of a person. A prejudiced mind will lose the capacity for right perception. A wrong perception will create a wrong concept which ultimately leads to wrong judgment and wrong decisions.

In yogic terms, it is presumed that such a collection of data of past events is stored in *Karmashaya.* It is also presumed that the result of each action or Karma is the resultant outcome of the nature of past action. Hence each person gets the rewards as per his actions. Bad action brings bad results and good action brings good results. All the future actions of the person are guided by this *Karmashaya,* that is, by his previous actions. The person, who does not trust his friends, will never get a trustworthy friend in his life time. The person who is in the habit of cheating others will always be surrounded by people who shall cheat him. At the same time the person who is honest, will be always surrounded by honest people. He will be respected in the society for his honesty.

So the first step in the process of mental growth is to clean the unwanted garbage from the mind. In order to throw all this

undesirable trash from the mind, one should remove all the prejudices from the mind. This cleaning process is called as '*chit-suddhi*'. The process of *chit-sudhi* will wipe out all the prejudices and misconceptions from the mind. The mind will become more receptive and open. **Only a pure and non-contaminated mind can easily imbibe and comprehend new ideas and knowledge.**

Mental Concentration

The second factor, which is hindrance to the mental development, is the wandering and restless nature of the mind and the inability to concentrate on a specific subject for longer period of time. Most of the time mind wanders aimlessly in different directions. At a given point of time it thinks regarding one subject and at another point of time it jumps on another subject. For example, one's mind might start thinking regarding one's own health. From this subject, it may jump to the costly medical care, from here it may jump to the bad hospital management; from here again it may think of the subject of lethargy and indifference of the government servants and ultimately from here the another chain of thoughts may sprout regarding the bad government or the latest selfish move of the ruling party. This is the usual habit of the mind. It wanders here and there aimlessly and purposelessly.

For solving any problem one has to reach to the source of the problem. This can be done only with mental concentration. Lack of concentration will not help the mind to solve any complicated problems or to perform any complicated research work.

The third obstacle for the human mental development is its pre-occupation in receiving constant flow of information through various sensory organs. The human mind is all the time busy receiving different types of information from the outside world. The mind is involved with various objects of the outside world, through its various sense organs. Hence through the eye it gets visual information, through the ears it gets auditory information, through skin it gets tactile information, and the nose gives one the information regarding different smells and tongue gives one information regarding different tastes. With the result the mind remains completely occupied in receiving, analyzing, storing and filing all the information received through the sensory organs. No time is left for tapping and utilizing the higher faculties of mind.

The fourth obstacle in the development of the mind is its mental turbulence. Most of the time mind is disturbed. It never remains calm and quiet. Mental turbulences are created by the different types of feelings and emotions. Emotions like love, hatred, desires, expectations, revenge, jealousy, greed, ego etc. are mostly responsible for creating mental turbulences. Sometimes such emotions are so deep rooted, that it will not allow the mind to think about any other subject. Most of the people spend most of their time and energy for nurturing their emotions. Their mind is never quiet and free from emotions. Their mental energy will be wasted for cultivating and rearing their emotions.

In short, the main hindrances for the development of the mental capacities are:-

A] Unawareness of the person regarding his own mental capacity and dissipation of the mental energies for trifle matters.

B] Inability to concentrate due to the wandering nature of the mind

C] Pre-occupation of the mind with varied information received through sensory organs

D] Mental turbulence by various emotional factors.

All these four factors which are obstacles to mental development can be taken care of by the process of meditation.

6] Basic concept of Meditation

Meditation is the process of training, taming and transforming the mind, with the ultimate goal of achieving mental quietude, peace and bliss. Thoughtlessness, timelessness and egolessness are the ultimate objectives of meditation. Now how can one achieve these objectives?

Different schools of thought have advocated different methods of meditation. Somebody has advocated, imagining the figure of one's favorite deity and meditating on the same. As per the *Kundlini Yoga's* opinion one can meditate on a '*chakra'* known as '*Muladhar'* and from their one has to shift the focus of concentration to the different charkas or centers of the body ultimately taking it to the final *chakra* in the mind called as *' Sahastrar'.*

As per the opinion of Buddhism, meditation is witnessing the event with total awareness. Meditation means awareness. And whatever action performed with awareness is meditation. In some schools, the students are taught to perform all their duties with full awareness. When they take bath, they take it with full awareness and when they eat, they eat the food with full awareness. As such most of the works are done, without total awareness to it. When one eats his food, he either tries to listen to the radio or watch TV or read a news paper. His attention is never towards the act of eating. With the result, neither he can enjoy eating, nor can he enjoy TV. When he walks on the road, he is not aware of his action of walking; his legs are automatically doing the act of walking, while his mind may be busy thinking of some other subjects. With the result the action of walking can not be enjoyed fully. Listening to music with full attention and with awareness is meditation. Drawing a picture with total awareness is meditation. Reading book with total engrossment is also an example of meditation.

The ultimate goal of meditation is thoughtlessness. Meditation is the process of disintegration of the mind. Meditation means mindlessness. *As such meditation is the act of doing nothing.* Meditation means stopping all the activities of the mind. In fact mind is nothing but a collection of thoughts and emotions. As far as thoughts and emotions persist, mind exists. But when there is no thought, no emotion, there is no mind. The stopping of all mental activities is meditation. But it is not as simple as it looks. Human mind is not like a machine. The activity of a machine can be stopped by the simple action of switching off push button. If a fan is moving

or if the TV is on, it can be stopped by switching off the push button. But there is no 'off' button in the mind which can stop all the activities of the mind. Right from the birth the mind is conditioned to think on various subjects. Mind is conditioned to respond with emotions to different life events. The thoughts and the emotions can not be stopped voluntarily. The mental activities can not be switched off like a machine. One has to learn the technique of stopping all the mental activities voluntarily. The technique of stopping all the mental activities is meditation. All the different methods advocated by the different schools of thoughts for meditation, are in real practice, techniques for stopping various mental activities.

A person tries various methods for meditation with the expectation of achieving something. He performs and practices one technique for a few days and then he complains that the process advocated is useless because nothing happens to him in meditation. As such he has heard or read somewhere, about meditation. But he has never understood the real meaning of meditation. He has read that when a person meditates, he gets unthinkable joy, he can see the images of the deity, he can see various lights or he can hear divine music. The person meditating, all the time expects to see the image of his favorite deity, colorful lights or divine music. Once there is an expectation in the mind for some future event, the mind gets busy. Expectation of anything makes the mind busy. So such persons make their mind busy with expectations of some divine event to happen. With the result, the basic concept of meditation is lost. Instead of making his mind action-free, he engages his mind in the activity of expectations of the divine event. Such a person can never reach to the ultimate goal of meditation. **As such meditation is doing nothing.**

Zen is the sect popular in China. In Zen school much emphasis is put on effortlessness. The master asks his disciples 'Just to sit, and not do anything".

Someone may ask the question that if meditation is doing nothing, then why, so many different methods are advocated for meditation. As such all these methods advocated, are to systematically train the mind so that it learns the true yogic method to reach to the stage of complete inactivity.

Acharya Patanjali has advocated a systematic and a scientific technique for training the mind, in his book of "Yoga-sutra". As per his opinion, there are eight steps for achieving the final state of

'Kaivalya' or 'Samadhi'. Kaivailya means mere feeling of pure-self. He has advocated eight steps. These are *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, pratyahar, dharana, dhyan and Samadhi.* The first four steps are for preparing and training the physical body. The last four steps are for training the mind.

7] Steps of Meditation

Meditation helps in clearing the mind of all the obstacles which hinders the growth and development of the mental capacity. With the practice of meditation, one gets opportunity to enter into the depth of his own mind and explore the hidden capacities of the mind. The person, who is on the surface of water, will not get the idea of the depth of sea. Only the diver can get the exact idea of the depth and vastness of the sea. In the same way an ordinary person will not be in a position to recognize the capacities and the capabilities of his own mind, until he has endeavored to venture into its domain. Once the inward journey starts, the person starts becoming aware of his own mental capabilities.

The technique of concentration is the prerequisite for meditation. In the yogic terms, it is known as *Dharana*.

Dharna

As per the opinion of *Shree Patanjali, Dharana* is the process of totally focusing the mind on a specific subject. Hence the ability to concentrate the mind on one subject for a longer time is called as *Dharana*. The inherent nature of an ordinary mind is to wander and to jump from one subject to another. With practice and repeated efforts, one can learn to concentrate on one subject. This can be practiced not only during meditation but during the ordinary routine work of life. One can develop the ability to concentrate when doing routine activities such as eating, reading, playing, or even during watching movie or TV.

For understanding any subject or for analyzing any problem one has to concentrate on the subject or problems. It is very difficult to reach to the core of the problems without concentration. Meditation is a technique for training the mind. One can not meditate on any subject without the ability to concentrate.

Those who have developed the ability to concentrate are successful people in life. A student appearing for an exam has to concentrate on the subject that he is preparing for. Any subject read without concentration will not be understood properly. **Concentration is the process of connecting the mind to a particular subject for longer duration of time.** It is comparatively easier to concentrate on the subjects that are of one's choice and interest. If a person is interested

in a particular game, he will play the same with full concentration. The person, who is fond of reading detective novels, will be reading such novels with concentration. But the same person can not concentrate his mind while reading philosophical essays as this is not the subject of his choice and interest. One can improve one's ability to concentrate by regular and repeated practice. In the beginning one should start the practice for concentration by picking the subjects of his interest. Such subjects may be subjects like reading a favorite novel, listening to one's favorite music, playing games etc. Once one gets ability to concentrate on the subject of interest, one can try to concentrate the mind on other important subjects and problems.

The second method for developing mental ability of concentration is to concentrate on sense organs. One can sit in an apparently silent room. Close the eyes and try to hear the smallest perceptible sound. That sound can be the tick-tick of a watch, or it can be the humming of some insect, or it can be the singing of a bird. In the same way one may practice to feel the lighter sensations felt by the skin such as the feeling the air or the clothes touching the skin. Also to develop and sharpen the visual sense one must try to observe the minute details of any subject. Gradually one will develop the ability for concentration. There are certain games which require high degree of concentration. The most suitable game is game of chess. The player of chess has to concentrate deeply, in the each move of his opponent and then think about his response. Playing the game of chess will be helpful for the process of concentration. Once the mind gets trained in the technique of concentration, it will be easier for the mind to practice meditation.

Pratyahar

The second pre-requisite for the meditation is ability of the mind to enter into its own subconscious level. Most of t he time the mind is busy knowing, analyzing, and enjoying the world through the various sense organs. These sense organs are the five paths through which human mind get connected with outside world. With the result the mind never gets time to look into its own subconscious level. Technique of withdrawing the sense organs from the objects is known as *pratyahar* in yogic terms. Practice of *pratyahar* trains the mind for willfully withdrawing it from outside world.

It is presumed that when the mind gets connected with the external world or the subjects of the external world it also gets affected by it. The impressions of the external world, not only distract the mind from

meditation but it also creates mental turbulences which further disturbs mental peace.

The best way is to withdraw the sense organs from outside objects. This process is known as *Pratyahar* in the yogic terms. It is a known fact that the person gets all the information of the outside world, through his various sense organs, and his mind remains constantly busy collecting this information, analyzing it and filing it properly, to keep the same in the memory section of his mind. The connection of the mind with outer subjects creates lots of mental turbulences. The information gathered by the mind may be pleasurable or non-pleasurable. Accordingly it may create mental turbulences of either joy or sorrow. For example if listening to a good music, may be enjoyable, but hearing noises may be stressful; or the sight of a garden may give one a sense of pleasure, while observing a dead body on the ground may give a different feeling. Such mental turbulences are harmful for the mental peace and subsequently for the mental development. Such mental turbulences are also obstacles to the process of concentration. So it is mandatory to withdraw mind from all the external objects before starting meditation. In the process of meditation one has to sit quietly in a separate silent room and the eyes must be kept closed. Sitting in a quiet room with closed eyes will create the situation of *Pratyahar*. Automatically his senses will be withdrawn from the outside objects. As the eyes are closed, so visual information is not received by the mind. The person has selected the room which is silent, so auditory information will also not reach the mind. In the same way smell, taste and touch sensations are also reduced to the minimum level as the person is not doing any activity to encourage taste, smell or touch sensations.

In the beginning one has to forcibly close all the doors through which such information reach normally to the mind. But gradually with the practice of meditation, one learns how to disassociate the mind from the sensory organs. Normally the sensory organs are functional only when the mind is connected with it. For example the person is passing on the road, his eyes are open, but his mind is completely engrossed in the thought of some past event. His mind may be busy thinking about his hardship in service, or rebuke received by him from his boss for making some gross mistake. Now at the same time, one of his friends is coming from opposite side of the road. His eyes are open. So the eyes can see the image of his friend's figure but because his mind is deeply engrossed in some other thought, and because his mind is not functionally connected with the eyes, the visual

impression will not be registered on the mental screen. With the result, he will not wakefully notice the presence of his friend on the road. This is because his mental attention is not towards the friend, but it is towards some other thoughts. In the same way when the person is deeply engrossed in reading some interesting book, he will not hear any music played on the radio in the next room.

It is the rule that the sense organs can be only effective when the mind is associated with it. The same principal can be utilized in deep meditation. In the beginning one has to close the doors of all the sense organs, to stop the mind from getting distracted. But once one knows the technique of meditation, one learns the technique of concentration, and he subsequently gets mastery in the technique of disconnecting his mind from the outside world and connecting it to the subject of his choice. And henceforth he is not required to intentionally close the doors of his sense organs. Such a person can meditate peacefully without any distraction under all circumstances. He can meditate even on the railway platform.

Sakshibhava

The greatest disturbance in the process of mental development is mental turmoil and turbulences. Human mind is never quiet and peaceful. It gets agitated by various factors like injury to personal ego, unmet expectations, and unfulfilled desires. It can also get disturbed by the uncontrolled emotional outbursts of the mind. Emotions like love, hatred, fear, jealousy, anger, greed, etc can disturb the tranquility of the mind. An agitated mind can not meditate properly, so one has to learn to control his emotions. This can be achieved through awareness towards the self. One has to learn how to disassociate the mind from such events. In yogic term it is called '*Sakshibhava'*. *'Sakshibhava'* is to be the witness of one's own life events without being emotionally involved with it. One has to be a neutral spectator of each event. One has to look towards the life as a neutral and an unattached onlooker. The person watching the drama never gets emotionally upset by the misery of the hero because he is aware that this is the drama and he is not the part of drama but he is only spectator of the drama. In the same way, as per Hindu philosophy, one has to develop *Sakshibhava* towards all the events of life. One should not emotionally attach himself with any event. This practice of *Sakshibhava* is very difficult to put into practice. But awareness towards the self and deep understanding of the futility of

various emotional attachments can gradually bring that feeling of *Sakshibhava*.

Dharana and Dhyan

When the process of concentration is gross in nature, it is known as *Dharana*. When the same process becomes more subtle, it is known as *Dhyan.* When the mind selects one subject for the purpose of concentration, it is known as *Dharana.* In the beginning the mind is connected to the subject through one of the sense organs. As such there is an invisible link between the subject and the mind. After establishing the link, the mind starts analyzing the subject; the mind enters into the deeper core of the subject. Attaching the mind to the subject is known as *Dharana* and entering into the deeper core of the subject, is known as *Dhyan*. For example out of several books, selecting a single book for reading is known as *Dharana.* But when the person starts reading the book and he is totally absorbed in the contents of the book and he becomes one with the literature of the book he enters into the phase of *Dhyan.* Hence becoming one with the subject is known as *Dhyan.* When one starts the process of meditation, it is *dharana.* In the beginning the mind and the subject of concentration are two separate entities. With deeper concentration the mind gradually loses its separate entity. The mind gets lost in the subject. In simple words it becomes one with the subject. Now there is only one entity and that is mind and the subject in unison. This is the stage of *dhyan.* When one listens to a selected melody of music is *dharana.* But when the listener becomes one with the music, and when he forgets all his surroundings and even himself, when his own entity is dissolved in the music, it becomes *Dhyan.*

Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyan, Samadhi- one continous process

The first thing one learns through the process of meditation is the ability to concentrate. In the Sanskrit language world for meditation is *Dhyan. 'Dhyan'* means contemplation, paying attention to a specific object. In the practice of *Dhyan* one starts withdrawing his attention from the outside world and starts drawing his attention towards the internal mental faculties. In the beginning the practitioner of meditation is asked to close the eyes and start paying attention to some imaginary object, deity or event. In the beginning one can not

concentrate for a longer period, but gradually one gets habituated to keep his mind on a particular subject for longer period of time.

In book of *Rajyog, Acharya Patanjali* has advocated four steps for the ultimate goal of reaching to the stage *Kaivalya.* These four steps are scientifically arranged in such a way that it gradually takes the mind to the final stage of ecstasy. These four steps are *Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi.* In the first step of *pratyahar*, the mind withdraws his attention from the out side world, by breaking its attachment with the sensory organs. In the second step of *dharana,* it selects one subject for the purpose of meditation. In the third step of *dhyan,* the mind becomes one with the subject. In the final stage, there is no mind and there is no subject, there is only nothingness. In this stage, the mind dissolves it self into nothingness. When there is no mind, then there is no ego. With the loss of ego, the person becomes absolutely free. He is *Mukta.* He attains the stage of *Kaivalya.*

8] Stages of Meditation

With the practice of *Dhyan,* the mind learns to move inward. In the initial phase of meditation the mind roams in the conscious part. One may remember the past, one may remember the relations, and one may remember the family members or friends. One may remember the material world. After some time the mind gets tired of remembering the same subjects, so it tries to enter into the deeper layer of its own sphere. The person sitting in meditation starts, analyzing his own nature. He visualizes his good and bad characters. Not only he visualizes it, he starts analyzing it. As such the basic nature of the mind is to progress, to grow, to develop and to evolve. The natural instinct of the mind is to progress towards positivism.

Nobody likes to have bad characters. Nobody likes to be egoistic or greedy; nobody likes to be fearful by nature. No body likes to be dishonest or violent. Nobody likes to be jealous. *All these negative characters are flourished, because the person is not aware of it.* All these negative characters are lying in the subconscious strata of the mind. Most of the time those negative characters can not come out on the surface, because it is controlled by intelligence or '*Buddhi*'. But in certain moments, the *'Buddhi'* loses the control and the negative character gets a chance to come on the surface. It is very difficult to be angry, with conscious awareness towards it. When a person starts taking any sedative drug or alcohol, the drug or alcohol affects first in the upper layer of mind i.e. *Buddhi*. The sedative effect of the drug or alcohol reduces the efficiency of *Buddhi.* With the effect, it loses control over the other negative characters lying deep in the mind. With the effect those negative characters take over the control of the body. Such a person can easily get angry, he can show his egoistic attitude or he may start behaving like a wild animal. Once the effect of alcohol is gone, and once he regains his consciousness, he realizes that he has misbehaved, and then he regrets and repents of his misbehavior. This shows that basically nobody likes to possess negative characters. But they are unable to control those negative feelings because they lack strong determination or they are unaware of it.

In meditation mind travels to the deeper layer of consciousness. There it clearly visualizes its negative characters lying over there. Now it gets chance to analyze those character. He becomes aware of his own negative characters. The moment mind becomes aware of negative characters, they disappear automatically.

With the disappearance of negative characters, positive characters get a chance to grow freely. In the absence of fear, fearlessness grows, in absence of violence, non-violence grows. In absence of hatred love grows. In absence of attachment, sense of dis-attachment grows. In absence of anger, calmness grows. Now the mind becomes more calm and peaceful. Now there is no flow of emotions to create mental turbulences. Now only one sense prevails and that is the sense of I-ness. It is called '*Asmita'* in Sanskrit language. Asmita means pure sense of I-ness. The person realizes that he is alone in the whole world. All his senses of my-ness were delusory. All his cravings and desires for getting material gain are not going to give him any real peace of mind. Now there persists only a pure sense of I-ness.

But this is not the end. Still he has deep love for his physical body. He is attached with the physical body right from the birth. The physical body is gross. The mind is subtle. And Atman is subtler. Physical body is not immortal. As per the opinion of *Gita,* those who are born are bound to die. So the physical body will not exist after death. Only the Atman is considered as immortal. Atman is not born, and it will not die. It is eternal. At the time of death the Atman leaves the old body and enters into the new one, just as the person would remove the old clothes and put on new clothes.

As one goes deeper into the subconscious level during meditation the mind starts getting the sense of detachment from the physical body. He realizes that he is not the physical body but his real nature is Atman i.e. pure-self. The moment, the mind awakens from this long slumber of delusion, its attachment with physical body is broken. Now he is free. Now he has no fear of death because the Atman never dies.

Atman is immortal, indestructible, and unchangeable. As per opinion of *Gita,* no weapon can kill it, no fire can burn it, and no water can drown it. It is the pure live force. It is the part of *Brahma* or the universal live force. Atman is unchangeable, so it implies that Atman is complete in itself. Nothing can be added to it, or nothing can be removed from it. It is complete or '*Purna'*.

The final realization in the process of meditation is the sense of completeness or '*Purnatva*'. Being complete, there is no desire left to add anything. Now the person becomes desireless. Now the sense of I-ness also dissolves. The person realizes that he is not a separate

entity but he is part of *Brahma,* the universal live force. The wave of water is not separate from the ocean. It itself is the ocean. Now he realizes that he is not separate from God, the almighty. He is the part of God. In other words, he himself is God. The sense of separation from God is called *Dwait*. Now that sense also disappears. Now he realizes oneness with God, that is, *Advait.*

This is known as 'Mukti', 'Moksha', or 'Kaivalya'. This is the ultimate goal of life.

9] Methods of Meditation:

Various methods of meditations are advocated by different schools of thoughts. *Acharya Rajneesh* advocated dynamic meditation. Dynamic meditation is a modified combination of *Kapalbhati and Dhyan.* The practitioner is asked to do deep and fast breathing for ten minutes. Then he is supposed to follow his body movements. He can dance, jump, and sing etc. for ten minutes. Than he relaxes completely and automatically enters into the stage of trance.

Mahesh Yogi has advocated Transcendental meditation. In transcendental Meditation, one has to sit comfortably and then start mental recitation of some specific mantra. This is called as 'Mantra Jap'. This will be followed by *Dhyan*.

Shri Rohit Mehta suggested that one may imagine some pleasant event, and then can meditate on the same. Some people advocate concentrating on the tip of nose while meditating. Some people advise to meditate on the picture of one's favorite deity. As per the *Kundlini Yoga's* opinion one can meditate on a *'chakra'* known as '*Muladhar'* and from their one has to shift the focus of concentration to the different charkas or centers of the body ultimately taking it to the final *chakra* in the mind called as ' *Sahastrar'*.

The main objective of meditation is to calm down the mind, and to bring the mind to a level of complete quietude so that all the mental turbulences will disappear. This can be achieved by controlling all the thoughts and emotions. *Acharya Patanjali* has said that yoga means control of *'Chittavruti'. Chittavruti* is the word from Sanskrit language. *Chittavruti* in the wider sense is the group of all desires, all expectations, and all emotions. As per the opinion of *Patanjali*, most of the mental turbulences are due to thoughts connected to past events, or future desires, or outburst of emotions which are generated from various attachments. These mental turbulences can cause a sense of happiness or unhappiness, sense of joy or sorrow, sense of pleasure or displeasure. Ultimately the outcome of such mental turbulences is mental disturbance and loss of mental peace. So if all *chittavrutis* are controlled, one can automatically achieve mental peace. For that he has advocated the eight steps to be followed, that is*, yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyan* and *Samadh*i. In his opinion, it is not possible to pacify the mind by simply adopting one method. Most of the people are under the wrong impression that, one

can sit for meditation for a few minutes everyday and can achieve the results.

Meditation alone will not be effective for achieving the final goal of bliss and serenity. One has to change total life style for the same. One has to adopt the rules and regulations advocated by *Shree Patanjali*. The person, who is not honest with his friends and relatives, can not be honest with himself. There will not be harmony between his thoughts, speech and action. And absence of harmony will create internal mental conflict and loss of natural balance between the mind and the body. Such a person may not achieve any result even though he sits for meditation for hours every day. In the same way those who are not adopting non-violence or *'Ahimsa'*, will be nurturing the internal feeling of hatred. Such a hateful mind can not achieve peace or bliss. So it is imperative for the person to change his life style, and his way of thinking. He has to minimize his negative characters and try to maximize his positive characters.
Acharya Patanjali advocated five yamas. These are
1] truthfulness
2] non-violance
3] honesty
4] control on desires
5] minimum expectations from others

Same way five niramas [rules] are
1] purity, physical and mental
2] contentment
3] austerities
4] knowledge
5] self confidence

When these yamas and niyamas are adopted in life, it gradually changes persons attitude, perception and concept of life.

Change of life style and adopting positive attitude will prepare the mind for the last step for meditation. Keeping all these objectives and factors in mind one can select his own method of meditation. One method of meditation maybe suitable to one person but it may not be suitable to another person because everybody's mental make up and attitude is different.

Music and Meditation:

Music is an example of a high quality meditation. Music and meditation can go well together. About this *Acharya Rajneesh* has mentioned "To me music and meditation are two aspects of the same phenomenon. Without music, meditation is little dull and unlived. And without meditation music is simply noise".

Music, specifically Indian classical music, affects the mind deeply and profoundly. Indian ragas are scientifically prepared. Each Raga has different effects on the mind. Most of the ragas are meant for calming the mind and for giving divine pleasure to the mind. For enjoying Indian classical music, one has to understand the basic science of Indian music. Indian music is generated from *Samveda. Samveda* is the original religious book, which contains complete knowledge and technique regarding all the fine arts, especially for dance and music.

Those who can understand and enjoy Indian classical music can meditate on the same. Sit in calm and secluded room, and start playing Indian classical music and listen to it attentively. Gradually the music will take you to the stage of deep mental calmness, peace and joy.

Those who can sing classical music are more fortunate. Singing classical music serves the purpose of *pranayama,* and meditation. One has to control breathing while practicing and singing Indian classical music. When singing one has to sing a number of different tunes or '*sur*' which require systematic control of your breathing. This practice of singing various tunes in different ragas for a longer period of time is the *Rechak* part of *pranayam*. Gradually the musician gets practice, for lengthening the '*sur*' for a number of seconds or *matras.* With continuous practice one can lengthen the same '*Sur*', with same exhalation up to 25, 30 or 40 seconds.

In the same way while singing, one has to be very particular and specific regarding *raga, bandish, tal, matras, sur,* etc. Good music is the combination of all these factors. One has to be very attentive during practice. In order to produce a good piece of music, the mind has to be completely focused and concentrated and it must not think of any other subject other than music. This situation is the situation of thoughtlessness. At the same time, the singer himself gets absorbed into the melodious lure of music, and he becomes one with the music. He himself is lost in the music. This is egolessness. So in musical

practice one can easily get into the stages of thoughtlessness and egolessness, which are the ultimate goals of meditation. This is the reason why music is the best kind of meditation.

As such any action, any activity done with interest, concentration and awareness and oneness with the subject is meditation.

Process of Meditation:

Meditation is to be done, after performing *pranayam.* Hence there is no need for making separate preparations for meditation. Whatever preparations are done for the purpose of *pranayam*, are applicable for meditation.

One should sit in a silent and a comfortable room. Sitting posture can be either *Sukhasana, or Siddhasana or Padmasan.* One should sit in a comfortably straight posture. If one can not keep the back straight without support, one can take the help of a back support. In the beginning for one or two minutes, one should not do anything. Let the heart rate and the respiratory rate come down to normal. Then one should recite a prayer of one's choice. One can sing this prayer aloud or recite it in the mind. The prayer will be helpful for removing unwanted thoughts from the mind. During prayer, one should have the feeling of complete trust and sense of surrender to God.

After prayer one should perform *Bhramari pranayam* along with recital of OM.

Bhramari Pranayam

This type of *Pranayam* is named as *Bhramari pranayam,* because of the typical hum that is produced during the process of this *Pranayam. Bhramar* is the Sanskrit word for bee. When group of bees fly together, it produces special hum. Same type of sound is produced when *Bhramari Pranayam* is practiced. This *Pranayam* should be done in the sitting posture. *Sidhasan, Padmasan, or Sukhasan* can be convenient for this *Pranayam.* One should sit comfortably on the *asan* keeping the back straight. Eyes should be closed. In *Bhramari Pranayam* there are two main components. These are *Purak and Rechak.* One has to take a deep breath, and then allow the air to come out slowly. When air is coming out through the sound tract (vocal cords), it produces a special sound. *Purak* is deep and quick. While *Rechak* is slow.

Bhramari Pranayam can also be performed along with recital of *Omkar Mantra. Omkar* is the *Beej- mantra.* As per the Vedic philosophy, *omkar* is the symbol of God. *Omkar-Japa* (repetition of the same mantra for several times) is considered as highly beneficial for the *Sadhaka.* This *Omkar Japa* can be performed along with the *Bhramari Pranayam.* The word *Om* is made up of three alphabets. These are O, U, and M. When all the three are spoken together it produces specific sound. The *Omkar* can be pronounced as three different ways.
A] When O and M, both are equal in length. It can sound like O….M….
B] When O is longer than M. it can sound like O…….M.
C] When O is shorter and M is longer. It sounds like O… M…….

'O' is a vowel and 'M' is the consonant. But both can be prolonged as per the wish of the speaker. When 'O' is spoken in prolonged tone, mouth remains open; 'M' can be spoken with closed lips. Both the words are vocalized when air is allowed to pass through the vocal cords. Prolongation of the word depends upon the ability to push the air outside for a longer time period. A person who has the capacity to inhale more air, and at the same time, who can very slowly release the same air through the sound tract (vocal cord), can vocalize the word *'Om'* for a longer period. As it is shown before, it can be done in three different ways. The last method, where 'O' is short, and 'M' is long can be suitable for *Bhramari Pranayam*. In the beginning air should be inhaled to the maximum capacity. Then *Om* should be vocalized, with short 'O' and long 'M'. This can be prolonged as much as possible. At the end when no more air can be pushed outside through vocal cords, it will not be possible to vocalize M. At this point of time, air is inhaled either through nose or through the mouth, Again '*Om'* should be repeated with a short 'O' and a long 'M'. In this way the same process can be repeated for 12 to 15 times. One should keep the eyes closed during the whole process. Immediately after the *Pranayam* one can move into a meditative state.

Bhramari pranayam should be followed by meditation. One should keep the eyes closed. And one should remain in the same position. Concentration should be on the respiration. One should feel the air going in and coming out of the nose. If possible start counting the respiratory cycles mentally. Generally in normal circumstances there are 15-18 respiratory cycles in one minute. So if one desires to meditate for 15 minutes then he should count the cycle up to 300 counts. Once the count is over, one should recite a favorite prayer or a *sloka* or else one can only say 'OM-Shanti, Om-Shanti, Om –Shanti' and complete thereby the process of meditation. Once the meditation

is over, one should sit in the same position for 2-3 minutes and then slowly gets up. This is the complete method of meditation.

To summarize, this process can be divided into the following four stages.

a) Prayer
b) *Pranayama* with Omkar recitation
c) Meditation (doing nothing)
d) *Sloka* or prayer or shanti mantra.

Factors to be considered during the practice of meditation.

During meditation keep the mind calm and cool. Body and mind should be completely relaxed.

One should not expect that the thought process will be stopped immediately. On the contrary, there will be more thoughts disturbing the mind. One should not try to either stop the thought process or to suppress it. One should allow the thoughts to come and go as they rush to the mind. One should pay no attention to those thoughts. *No importance should be given to those thoughts.* Thoughts may come and thoughts may go. Just watch them as a neutral witness. One should watch his own thoughts as if one is watching the scene on a cinema screen or a TV screen.

If one tries to prevent or control the thoughts, it will create a conflict in the mind. The act of suppression of thoughts itself will hamper the basic philosophy of meditation. The basic philosophy of meditation is to keep the mind calm and cool. But the act of suppression or controlling the thoughts will create a conflict in the mind. One part of the mind will try to bring the hidden thoughts to the surface while second part of the mind will try to suppress it. So it will create a conflict and ultimately will lead to loss of mental peace. So in short one should not suppress those thoughts, but only watch them as a neutral witness without giving any importance to those thoughts. If no importance is given to those thoughts, it will loose its strength and in the course of time it will disappear.

Be aware of whole physical body and body sensations. One may concentrate on different sensory organs. If one concentrates on ears and audio functions, one may start listening to even the smallest sound. One can hear tick-tick of the watch in the room, one may listen to the voice of some bird, or one may listen to the sound of a vehicle passing on the nearby road, and one may listen to the talk of

some person sitting in the next room or next flat. Just listen to it again as neutral witness. In the same way tactile sensations can be felt. With concentration one can feel the beating of one's own heart. One can feel the pulsation on one's own fingers. One can feel the touch of air on the skin. Eyes are closed so there is no possibility of getting any sensation from eyes. But with the closed eyes also one may see different shapes in front of the eyes, just be a witness to all these sensory feeling.

One should never expect any miracle to happen during meditation. Most of the people read a number of books to learn meditation; they also hear the experiences of other people who practice and teach meditation. In many of the books it has been mentioned that during meditation, one listens to divine music, one sees the image of some deity or one sees the different colored lights or a glow of light. With this knowledge in the back of their mind, people expect to experience such miracles happening during their own practice of meditation. Such expectations will disturb the calmness of the mind. Such expectations will again put the mind into action and so it will create mental turmoil. Ultimately nothing will happen and the practitioners will be disappointed due to their failure to experience such miracles. Even if such miracles were to happen they would happen effortlessly when the mind is extremely cool and calm.

Even if one listens to divine music or one sees divine images during meditation, one should not stop at this stage because the ultimate aim of meditation is not to get such divine experiences. These are the *siddihis,* but if one stops his efforts after getting *siddhi,* one will not be in a position to reach to the ultimate goal.

With more and more practice, it will be easier to enter into the depth of meditation. In the beginning one may take 2-3 hours of meditation to reach to the deeper level of consciousness. But with more practice, that time period will be reduced. After practicing meditation for a longer period of time, one may reach to the same depth of consciousness within 15 minutes.

It may happen that during meditation one may become aware of his own positive and negative characters. The awareness of negative characters, can depress the person. But one should not be afraid to face the realities. If there exists any negative character, it is going to come to the surface of the consciousness during meditation. At that point one should try to analyze it fully. One should try to find out the

root cause of these negative characters. One should be aware of the harmful effect of such characters. The moment the mind will realize the worthlessness of such characters, the mind will drop it.

Meditation can be compared with the action of diving into the deep sea. In meditation one dives deep into subconscious level of his mind. In the case of the diver, as he goes deeper into the sea he sees a number of objects. As he goes deeper and deeper he discovers a whole new universe in the deep sea. At the utmost depth of the seabed the diver can get invaluable articles which he has never seen before.

In the same way, when the mind starts going deeper and deeper into self consciousness, it meets with a number of thoughts. First and foremost, the negative characters come up in the mind and then he comes across the positive characters, like love, non-violence, trustworthiness, etc. One should be aware of these characters also. One should not stop at that level. Positive characters are helpful for strengthening the mind but it will not help one to realize the self.

After some time, when the mind delves deeper, there be only a feeling of "I-ness". There are no negative or positive characters. There are no emotions, feelings or attachments. Only I-consciousness exists at this level. In fact the self simply exists on this plane. At this stage one feels that he is not the body but something other than the body. As such the feeling of I-ness is not attached with the body. It is attached with the mind. So now the mind gets separated from the body. Only feeling of I-ness persists. Now there is no sense of my-ness. Hence the feeling of "my family', 'my relatives', 'my property' or 'my prestige' gets dissolved. Even the feeling of 'my body' is dissolved. Only the pure feeling of "I" persists. This 'I' is without any attachments, and now one becomes aware that one is alone in this world. All the worldly relations are temporary, only "I" is permanent. The worldly relations of family, friends, relatives, property etc. are man-made and it has no impact on the pure "I-ness". At this stage one realizes the pure image of Atman. One realizes that I am not body but I am pure the live force or Atman.

As per Hindu philosophy even the feeling of pure "I-ness" is even not desirable. It hampers the progress in spirituality. With further practice of meditation, one may reach to the stage, where the feeling of "I-ness" will be lost. At this stage 'I' is totally dissolved in the universal force. Once this feeling prevails in the mind, and once the feeling of I-ness dissolves, one reaches the stage of egolessness. Now there exists only a

universal vital force. Now I and God are not separate but they are one. Now it occurs to him that he is a part of the universal vital force or *'Brahma'*. Once the 'I' is dissolved, one gets dis-attached from all the worldly bondages.

Now he is neither happy nor unhappy. Only eternal joy persists. This is the joy of mere existence. This is known as *'Mukti', or 'Moksha' or 'Kaivalya'*. And this is not only the final aim of meditation but it is actually the ultimate aim of life.